
Comparative History

See History.

Comparative Literature

Courses of Study:
Major (B.A.)

Objectives

Comparative literature is the study of literature and culture across national and linguistic boundaries with emphasis placed on the comparison of literary texts. The program offers the student an opportunity to combine an interest in a particular foreign literature and literature in general with studies in theory, film, folklore, artistic expression, and literary criticism. Course offerings are divided into two categories: period courses, which examine the spirit and intellectual continuity of an age reflected in the works of its major authors; and thematic courses, which emphasize a literary theme, motif, genre (e.g., novel, lyric, drama, epic, picaresque), or mode (e.g., satire, allegory, symbolism). The common text in all courses is in English. The comparative literature faculty is drawn from departments of language and literature across the University.

How to Become a Major

All students are welcome to enroll in any course in the program, unless prerequisites are stipulated. Students interested in learning more about the comparative literature major are encouraged to speak with the undergraduate advising head in comparative literature.

Committee

Erica Harth, Chair and Undergraduate Advising Head
(Romance and Comparative Literature)

Mary Campbell
(English and American Literature)

Stephen Dowden
(German, Russian, and East Asian Languages and Literature)

Patricia Johnston
(Classical Studies)

Edward Kaplan
(Romance and Comparative Literature)

Susan Lanser
(English)

Richard Lansing
(Romance and Comparative Literature)

James Mandrell
(Romance and Comparative Literature)

Angela María Pérez
(Romance and Comparative Literature)

Requirements for the Major

Comparative Literature Track I

The minimum requirement for the major in Comparative Literature Track I consists of 10 semester courses: The Proseminar in European Cultural Studies, five courses in comparative literature, three courses in any one foreign literature, and either the Senior Essay or the Senior Thesis. Unless otherwise specified, courses in a foreign literature are taught in the original foreign language.

A. ECS 100a (European Cultural Studies: The Proseminar) to be completed *no later* than the junior year.

B. Five semester courses in comparative literature from the COML and cross-listed courses on page 120. At least one of the five courses must relate to literature prior to the 19th century (COML 102a, 103b, 104a, or HUM 10a).

C. Three upper-level semester courses in any one of the following foreign literatures: French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Russian, Spanish.

D. Majors are required to enroll in and complete one of the following options in the senior year: COML 97a or 97b (Senior Essay), or COML 99d (Senior Thesis), a full-year course. Students who wish to qualify for departmental honors must elect the thesis option. Honors are awarded on the basis of cumulative excellence in all courses taken in the major, including the Senior Thesis.

E. It is strongly recommended that majors (especially those who plan a graduate career in comparative literature) begin a second foreign language. In addition to the courses listed below, students should consult offerings in all foreign literatures, English, philosophy, history of ideas, and theater arts.

Comparative Literature Track II

The minimum requirement for the major in Track II consists of 10 semester courses: the Proseminar in European Cultural Studies, four in comparative literature, two in any one foreign literature, two in English literature or any second foreign literature, and either the Senior Essay or the Senior Thesis option.

A. ECS 100a (European Cultural Studies: The Proseminar) to be completed *no later* than the junior year.

B. Four semester courses in comparative literature from the COML and cross-listed courses below, at least one of which must relate to literature prior to the 19th century (COML 102a, 103b, 104a, or HUM 10a).

C. Two upper-level semester courses in any one of the following foreign literatures: French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Russian, Spanish.

D. Two upper-level semester courses in English literature or a second foreign literature (consult offerings in the Department of English and American Literature or the relevant foreign literature department).

E. All majors are required to enroll in and complete one of the following options in the senior year: COML 97a or 97b (Senior Essay), or COML 99d (Senior Thesis), a full-year course. Students who wish to be considered for departmental honors must elect the thesis option. Honors will be awarded on the basis of cumulative excellence in all courses taken in the major, including the Senior Thesis. Departmental honors will be awarded on the basis described above. All courses in comparative literature are conducted in English.

Courses of Instruction**(1-99) Primarily for Undergraduate Students****COML 97a Senior Essay**

Signature of the instructor and the advising head of comparative literature required. Usually offered every year. Staff

COML 97b Senior Essay

Signature of the instructor and the advising head of comparative literature required. Usually offered every year. Staff

COML 98a Independent Study

May be taken only by majors with the written permission of the advising head and the chair of the department. Signature of the instructor required. Readings and reports under faculty supervision. Usually offered every year. Staff

COML 98b Independent Study

May be taken only by majors with the written permission of the advising head and the chair of the department. Signature of the instructor required. Reading and reports under faculty supervision. Usually offered every year. Staff

COML 99d Senior Thesis

May be taken only with the permission of the advising head. Signatures of the instructor and advising head required. This is a full-year course that must be taken by all senior majors in comparative literature who wish to undertake honors work. Usually offered every year. Staff

(100-199) For Both Undergraduate and Graduate Students**COML 100b The Postcolonial Novel**

[hum]
Explores the shared history of colonialism, specifically British Imperialism, for many countries and examines the postcolonial novel written in English, or translated into English from the original language. Concentrates on literature from South Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. Special one-time offering. Will be offered in the fall of 2003. Ms. Singh

COML 102a Love in the Middle Ages

[hum]
A study of the conventions of courtly love and other forms of love, sacred and erotic, in medieval literature. Readings include Dante's *Vita Nuova*, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and Chrétien's *Yvain*. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2002. Mr. Lansing

COML 103b Madness and Folly in Renaissance Literature

[hum]
A study of the theme of madness and folly as exemplified by the major writers of the Renaissance, including Erasmus, Rabelais, Montaigne, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Shakespeare, Petrarch, and Cervantes. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004. Mr. Lansing

COML 120a Art for the People

[hum]
Signature of the instructor required. How do literature and the arts transform people's lives and enrich the community? A look at selected works of Western art that have reached a broad public, from medieval drama to feminist art, from Charles Dickens to Maxine Hong Kingston. Usually offered every year. Last offered in the spring of 2002. Ms. Harth

COML 125a Introduction to East Asian Literature

[nw hum]
A survey of the literary traditions of China, Japan, and Korea, introducing students to selected works from the ancient times to the early 20th century. Usually offered every year. Will be offered in the fall of 2003. Ms. Seliger

COML 127a Night, Death, and the Devil: The Fantastic and the Grotesque

[hum]
A study of the fantastic and the grotesque as they appear in the literature, film, music, and the visual arts of the 19th and 20th centuries. Particular attention is paid to uses of the demonic as an aesthetic system for contemplating the metaphysical and the subconscious. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2001. Staff

COML 128b Writing Social Inequality

[hum]
This course may not be taken for credit by students who have taken USEM 12b or USEM 12b+W (Not for the Fainthearted) in previous years. Transformations of the theme of nature and culture (inferior vs. superior) into a discourse of social inequality. Texts include Shakespeare's *The Tempest*; Rousseau's *Second Discourse*; Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*; Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*; Toni Morrison, *Sula*. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2003. Ms. Harth

COML 129a Reflections on the Revolutions in France

[hum]

The French Revolution is the great watershed between the Ancien Regime and modern times. Studies the reaction to the events in France through a selective group of European novelists, essayists, and poets. Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the fall of 2000.

Staff

COML 130a Poetic Voices of Protest

[hum]

Poets are citizens, lovers, artists. Class discusses major poems by Whitman, Baudelaire, Rilke, Mallarmé, T.S. Eliot, Anna Akhmatova celebrating American nationhood, protesting World War, or Soviet dictatorship. Topics include myth, self-assertion, love and intimacy, decadence, ethics, history, a mother's voice. Usually offered every fourth year. Last offered in the fall of 1999.

Mr. Kaplan

COML 135b Sexualities and Cinema

[hum]

Course may be repeated for credit.

Considers from a comparative perspective topics relating to sexuality and film. Topics will vary but may include representations of homosexuality; representations of gays and lesbians; theoretical approaches to gay and lesbian films. Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the summer of 2000.

Mr. Mandrell

COML 144b The Outsider as Artist and Lover

[hum]

Baudelaire, Kierkegaard, and Kafka exemplify the struggle to achieve meaning through literature. But they believed that art or God required them to renounce love and marriage. Buber's analysis of "dialogue" will clarify the interrelation of creativity, faith, and human intimacy in their short stories, prose poems, parables, philosophical and autobiographical writings. Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the fall of 2001.

Mr. Kaplan

COML 147b The City: Metropolitan Glory and Urban Alienation

(formerly LS 230b)

[hum]

May not be taken for credit by students who have taken LS 230b in previous years. The imperial cities of Europe have symbolized majesty and promise as well as despair, alienation, and misery. Examines visions of the glory and ignominy, honor and depravity born of the modern metropolis. Course materials will include poetry, prose, visual art, and film. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2002.

Staff

COML 150b Japanese Women Writers

[nw hum]

A systematic overview of the history and modalities of Japanese women's writing while engaging the concept of gender as a category of literary analysis. Builds familiarity with representative texts and promotes understanding of Japanese women's role in Japanese and world literature. Special one-time offering. Was offered in the spring of 2003.

Ms. Seliger

COML 152a The Rise and Fall of Humanism

[hum]

The emancipation of the human mind from fear, superstition, and intolerance is at the root of what is called the Humanist Tradition. This legacy began with the Greeks and the Romans, and has had wide repercussions throughout the ages to the present. Each period has emphasized freedom, the rights of the individual, and some sense of equality. But each age also redefined these concepts. Examines the birth, development, and decline of Humanism. Usually offered every fourth year. Last offered in the fall of 1999.

Staff

COML 160b Narrative in Literature and Film

[hum]

Examines the construction of narrative and meaning in literature and film. Class discussions of texts and film clips will focus on the interplay between visual and verbal images and imaginings in both media. Examples of works to be examined: Vladimir Nabokov, *The Defense*; Marleen Gorris, *The Luzhin Defense* (film); Jane Austen, *Emma* (novel and film). Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Ms. Harth

COML 165a Reading, Writing, and Teaching across Cultures

(formerly LS 224b)

[hum]

Enrollment limited to 20.

Contemporary literary representations of literacy, schooling, and language from a cross-cultural perspective. Students also analyze their own educational trajectories and experiences with writing and reading. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Ms. Hale

COML 170a Working across Cultures

[hum]

Give students a conceptual framework with which to understand the ways in which political, ethical, and cultural differences encountered when working with groups from other cultures are narrated and understood. Intended as a seminar for students who are interested in narratives involving the negotiation of cultural and linguistic differences and for those who are currently involved in cross-cultural internship or who are interested in working with groups from other cultures sometime in the future. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Ms. Ratner

COML 179a Life Stories, Spiritual and Profane

[hum]

Enrollment limited to 25.

Examines modern life stories (such as biographies, autobiographies, journals, fiction) concerning personal identity in relation to the search for God, mysticism and anguish, conversion, moral action, and intimate love. Augustine's *Confessions* and *Teresa of Avila's Life* provide models.

Usually offered every third year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Mr. Kaplan

COML 180a The Theater of the Absurd

[hum]

Enrollment limited to 20.

A study of the form and content of the theater of the absurd, in Europe and the United States, its antecedents, the theatrical tradition against which this new esthetic was born, and especially reading and presentations of the plays identified as "absurdist" drama. Class consists of lectures, discussions, in-class presentations of scenes, and frequent papers. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2001.

Ms. Hale

COML 185a Dickens and Dostoevsky

[hum]

Considers such issues as narrative, literary realism, and the manipulation of the grotesque and the sublime in representative works of Dickens and Dostoevsky. Because Dostoevsky was an avid reader of Dickens, class addresses questions of influence, particularly with regard to their shared thematic interests. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2001.

Ms. Miller

COML 195a Feminism and Film

[hum]

Signature of the instructor required.

What feminist critics and theorists have to say about film from classic Hollywood to current feminist avant-garde and experimental cinema. Screenings of films about women, by women, and based on novels about feminism. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2001.

Ms. Harth

COML 198a Feminist Texts, Feminist Theory

[hum]

Signature of the instructor required.

An exploration of feminist themes and theory in literature and culture through the 20th century and into the 21st. Texts include works by Virginia Woolf, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Simone de Beauvoir, Audre Lorde, Cristina Garcia, Fatima Mernissi, Bharati Mukherjee, and others. Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the fall of 2000.

Ms. Harth

Cross-Listed Courses**CLAS 170a**

Classical Mythology

ECS 100a

European Cultural Studies: The Proseminar

ENG 17b

African Novel

ENG 77b

Literature of Global English

ENG 114b

Gender and the Rise of the Novel in England and France

ENG 127a

Novel in India

ENG 147b

South African Literature and Apartheid

ENG 152b

Arthurian Literature

HUM 10a

The Western Canon

NEJS 180a

Love and Passion in Medieval Jewish Literature and Thought

THA 115b

The Avant-Gardes

Courses of Related Interest**EAS 175a**

Masterpieces of Chinese Fiction